

# e-Bugle

Garrett Bugle Internet Edition

Volume 64

March 2017

No. 3



## Calendar

Sat., Feb. 25	Art at Penn Place, last chance to see Youth Art Show before closing (see p 2)	Sun., Mar. 12	Daylight Savings time begins; reset clocks ahead
Mon., Feb. 27	Art at Penn Place: opening, Leila Holtsman, metal sculptures, till March 25 (see p 2)	Mon., Mar. 13	Town Council meeting, Town Hall, 7:30 pm
Thurs., Mar. 2	Neighbors Helping Neighbors, Town Office, 10 am; GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm	Tues., Mar. 14	Lunch Bunch, Town Hall, 12:30 pm
Sat., Mar. 4	GIVES collection, PO, 9 am–12 pm	Wed., Mar. 15	<i>Bugle</i> deadline, 4 pm
Sun., Mar. 5	Art at Penn Place, Meet-the-Artist reception, Leila Holtsman, 3–5 pm (see p 2)	Thurs., Mar. 16	GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm
Mon., Mar. 6	Weekly yard waste collection begins	Fri., Mar. 17	Film Society, <i>Wild Tales</i> , Town Hall, dinner 7 pm, film 8 pm (see p 5)
Thurs., Mar. 9	Citizens Association meeting, Town Hall, 7 pm: <i>Bugle</i> information gathering (see p 4)	Wed., Mar. 22	Citizens Association meeting, Town Hall, 7:30 pm: Nominations for Town Council (see pp 3, 4)
		Fri., Mar. 24	Pick up your <i>Bugle</i> , Penn Place lobby
		Thurs., Mar. 30	GP Jams, Town Hall, 8 pm

## Objective/Subjective

On a cold, amazingly windy night, under a piercingly clear starry sky, in a town covered in piles of fallen limbs, the Town Council met.

Much of the meeting was taken up with a request for a variance in order to build a sunroom that will be three feet closer to the homeowners' property line than the ordinances allow. Joanna Welch described the irregular shape of the lot and said that the owners would like to take down an existing open-air deck and construct the screened-in room.

The Land Use committee proposed an alternative sunroom of a good size but in a different position and in line with the ordinances, but their alternative was located on the side of the house, which would have made it visible from the street. The chair of Land Use recommended that the Council not approve the variance request, and Mayor Benjamin, in line with that recommendation, pointed out that much work and debate went into the ordinances. "We have to have a system

everyone can understand and which shouldn't vary. Since the Land Use committee was able to come up with another configuration which meets the conditions of ordinances, I think the residents should go with that." Hans Wegner remarked that the town wants to help only those with a pressing, demonstrated need. "Variances should not be easy to get."

Councilmembers Welch and Schulp expressed their support of the residents: The result will look better, and be more neighborly, since it will be hidden from the street. Jane McClintock quoted Emerson on foolish consistency and hobgoblins. "We shouldn't be completely bound by the ordinances if there is a better option. This is a very minor variance. The neighbors are happy with it, the homeowners are happy, and it preserves the streetscape view."

A debate now ensued on the danger of being subjective with the objective language of the ordinance. As with all debates about subjective

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v. objective, your reporter became confused. She reached back to her college course on Kant and came up empty-handed.

Dick Pratt’s statement to the Council snapped her back to reality: “I’m a little bit appalled with some of the arguments against this variance. You know I’m concerned about the historicity of the town; I’m upset that we let a Chevy house on Strathmore go. But in this case there’s ‘hardship’ to the town if you can’t look between the houses and see trees.”

The variance was granted with one vote against. The homeowner distributed baked goods to the Council and left.

Gene now talked about the proposed capital and operating budgets for fiscal 2018. Income tax will be going down, but property tax is looking great—lots of people are moving in, expanding homes... Assessments are going up... Indeed, said Peter, despite the lower income tax, “we do not have a large deficit. Everything’s working pretty well.”

Marian Green now described town Archives work, which is clearly thriving. She threw around a lot of big numbers—scanned maps, docs, clippings, photos, and the kitchen sink. Healthy numbers of volunteers are also appearing. “For less than \$20,000 the town has gotten an incredible amount of work done. *Bugles* and town directories have been scanned and catalogued... I think you got a bargain, and I would hope that you think so too.”

The Council also began the task of clarifying the responsibilities of election judges. “We need language for this,” said the Mayor. “We want to avoid dependency on the town staff.” A number of Councilmembers expressed an interest in working on formalizing the position.

Finally, the Mayor updated us on sidewalks. “I’m happy to announce that as of a couple of hours ago, we got authority from the state to award a contract to our engineering firm. They should be on the job as soon as we get the contract signed.”

Margaret Soltan

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~ Garrett Park resident ~



## Art at Penn Place

If you haven’t yet seen the 2017 Youth Art Show at the Gallery, make sure you stop by no later than February 25! Twenty-four young artists, ages 6 to 15, learned basic mosaics while creating beautiful carousel animals inspired by the Herschell-Spillman Carousel. The 24 unique animals include a pig, a camel, an ostrich, a turtle, an elephant, a goldfish, a cat and a dog, a snail, and so many more! You (and your children) won’t want to miss this incredibly creative exhibit!

Beginning February 27, we will exhibit the metal sculptures of Garrett Park artist Leila Holtsman. Born in Washington, DC, Holtsman spent 10 years of her early life in the deserts of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and this formative experience influences her interest in natural forms and earthen palettes to this day. An art residency at Rocky Mountain Recycling, a Denver-based metal recycling scrap yard, sparked interest in found images and objects, inspiring Holtsman to begin creating mixed-material sculptures.

Holtsman has shown across the Mid-Atlantic region, and has been juried into over two dozen East Coast art shows. She has produced large-scale steel wall pieces for clients in Washington, DC, and Philadelphia, and has works in collections throughout the DC/Maryland/Virginia area. Holtsman has an MBA from the University of Maryland, and a degree in International Relations and Russian Studies from the University of Virginia, Charlottesville. A participant in the Lee Arts Center Open Studio program in Arlington, Virginia, Holtsman is also a member of the Washington Sculptors Group. Her working studio is at the art incubator/seminar, Red Dirt Studio, in Mount Rainier, Maryland.

Holtsman’s work will be displayed in the gallery from February 27 to March 25, and her Meet-the-Artist reception is on Sunday, March 5, from 3 to 5 pm. Please join us!

Visit Garrett Park’s Web site:  
[www.garrettparkmd.gov](http://www.garrettparkmd.gov)

The *Garrett Bugle* is a publication of the Citizens Association of Garrett Park, published 10 times a year. Publication of the *Bugle* is supported by member dues. All residents of Garrett Park are members of the Citizens Association. Yearly dues (\$25 per family or \$15 per individual per address) can be sent to Citizens Association, Box 456, Garrett Park, MD 20896.

**Citizens Association Officers:**  
President: Darshini Trivedi  
Vice-Presidents: Michael Lutkenhouse; Lesley Maloney  
Treasurer: Bridget Silverman  
Secretary: Sean Conlan

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First-class subscriptions cost \$15 (bulk mail subscriptions are no longer available). Letters to the editor can be submitted by e-mail, mail, or hand to *Bugle* staff. The editor reserves the right to edit submissions for length and clarity. Unsigned letters will not be printed.

# Town Manager Notes

*Snow removal.* Although we have been almost “snowless” so far this year, it is likely that we will have some amount of snow during the coming few weeks. This is just a reminder that it’s especially important to park off the streets when snow is expected. Please call the Town Office with any questions or 911 with any emergencies. If you need help shoveling snow, we do have a list of Garrett Park and Garrett Park Estates students who are willing to help. Check the Post Office bulletin board, the *Bugle*, or call the Town Office for names.

*Town budget.* The Town Council introduced the proposed FY 2018 budget (July 2017 through June 2018) at its February 13 meeting. Residents are encouraged to review the budget on the town Web site and provide comments or suggestions regarding next fiscal year’s budget by contacting the Mayor, a Councilmember, or the Town Manager.

*State tax form reminder.* Remember to write “Garrett Park” in the box labeled “City, Town or Taxing Area” when filling out your state income tax forms. If someone prepares your tax returns for you, be sure to remind them to put “Garrett Park” in that box. This ensures that our community receives its fair share of the income tax revenues the state distributes to the 23 counties and 157 incorporated cities and towns throughout Maryland. This revenue supports many of the services the town provides to residents.

*Town elections 2017.* Election Day in Garrett Park will be Monday, May 1. Polls are open from 7 am to 7:30 pm in the public lobby of the Post Office at Penn Place. The terms of office for Town Councilmembers Kacky Chantry, Phil Schulp, and Joanna Welch are up this year. The last day to register to vote in this election is Friday, March 31. Candidate nominations will take place during the Citizens Association meeting on Wednesday, March 22, with the Candidates Forum currently set for Wednesday, April 26. Additional nominations may be made by written petition

signed by 10 registered voters and filed with the Town Office by 4 pm on Monday, April 10.

*Absentee ballots.* Note: All absentee ballots must be applied for in writing.

Applications for absentee ballots by registered voters will be available from the Town Office until the close of business on Wednesday, April 26. Once the application is received, absentee ballots will be mailed or can be picked up at the Town Office. After Thursday, April 27, a voter or the voter’s agent must obtain an absentee ballot application in person from the Town Office. All ballots must be received by the Judge of Elections by the close of the polls at 7:30 pm.

*Voter registration.* To be eligible to vote in a town election, voters must be registered with Montgomery County at a Garrett Park address, or on the list of qualified noncitizen Garrett Park residents. If you have not voted in a county/ state/national election in the last five years, the Montgomery County Board of Elections will have struck your name from the active voters file. You will need to renew your registration with the Board. The Board of Elections’ 24-hour Voter Information Line is 240-777-8683. You may also obtain forms needed to register at the Town Office during normal office hours (M–F, 8:30 am–4:30 pm) or anytime from the Post Office lobby. Please call the Town Office with any questions regarding registration, qualification of voters, nominations, etc.

Gene Swearingen,  
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# Citizens Association Notes

*New CA officers elected at Town Dinner.* Thanks to everyone who made this year's Town Dinner a success! The 2017 CA board is as follows:

President: Darshini Trivedi  
VPs: Michael Lutkenhouse, Lesley Maloney  
Treasurer: Bridget Silverman  
Secretary: Sean Conlan

*Bugle meeting planned.* Last month, the *Bugle's* intrepid editor announced she would be turning over the reins to a new editorial staff this year. Barbara has served as the editor of the *Bugle* for the last 29 years and has set a high bar for quality, consistency, and professionalism.

As the *Bugle* enters a new era, we would like to hold a meeting to gather your opinions about where the *Bugle* is headed in the next 29 years. We are planning a meeting on Thursday, March 9, at 7 pm to gather opinions about the *Bugle*. Keep your eye out for signs in the post office and notices on the listserv. We'll also be soliciting opinions via a number of survey tools.

If you are interested in becoming our next "J. Jonah Jameson" or "Jimmy Olsen" (or know someone who is), please contact Sean Conlan or Darshini Trivedi.

*Save the dates:*

- *Bugle* information gathering meeting: Thursday, March 9, 7 pm, Town Hall
- Candidate Nominations: Wednesday, March 22, 7:30 pm, Town Hall
- Candidates Forum: Wednesday, April 26, 7:30 pm, Town Hall

*Future meetings.* Do you have a suggestion or idea for a meeting topic that you feel would be of interest to the town? If so, please forward your thoughts to Darshini Trivedi or send a note to Box 456.

*Annual dues.* The Citizens Association 2017 annual dues are being collected. The annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$25 per family. Thank you to all of those who have already paid. For

those who have not, please submit dues by mailing them to the Citizens Association at Box 456.

*Garrett Park listserv.* Our neighborhood is made up of people with a wide variety of backgrounds, skills, perspectives, and experiences. Tap into these resources and stay informed with the Garrett Park neighborhood listserv. The listserv is an electronic forum for neighbors to communicate information about town concerns, safety issues, upcoming events, and recommended services (for example, contractors, lawn care, doctors, and baby sitters). The listserv will not be used for unsolicited marketing, and you can unsubscribe at any time. To join, e-mail Todd Harris or sign in at [groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettParkneighbors/join](https://groups.yahoo.com/group/GarrettParkneighbors/join).

*Questions or comments for the Citizens Association?* If so, please send a note to P.O. Box 456 or e-mail Darshini Trivedi.

## Greening Report

This month's green banner is sponsored by John M. Payne, in memory of Dorothy Marie "Dori" Davis. Our sincere thanks and condolences go to John.

We also received a contribution from Lisa and Rod Woodford, which we allocate to the February banner, which, as you may recall, had no sponsor when we went to press. Many thanks to them for responding to last month's report on our empty coffers.

In the coming months, we will also be acknowledging other sponsors, whose contributions will cover the green banner through July. Thanks, everyone, for the great response.

If anyone else would like to support the Citizens Association with contributions of any kind, including dues (\$25 per family or \$15 per individual per address), please make out a check to the Citizens Association with a note in the memo line explaining what it is for, and mail it to the Citizens Association at Box 456. We'd be most grateful.

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# Community Fund Update

In the past year, in accordance with its mission, the Garrett Park Community Fund (GPCF) gave out two emergency grants and a music scholarship. We are grateful to our supporters for making this possible.

In case you don't know about this organization, GPCF was established in 2013 as an umbrella organization for charitable projects within the town of Garrett Park. It currently administers two well-established and valued projects—the Betsy White Emergency Fund and the Ilah Geiser Music Scholarship Fund. The officers are Garrett Park residents who serve without compensation. GPCF is an independent group and is separate from any town of Garrett Park administration or responsibility. After long and resolute work by the GPCF board for tax-exempt status, IRS granted the organization a charitable 501(c)(3) status in 2014.

*What is the Betsy White Emergency Fund?* The Women's Club of Garrett Park, with a donation of \$700, established an "Emergency Fund" in 1969. The fund was renamed in 1973 in honor of Betsy White, an officer and beloved member. It has been maintained since then through fundraising by the Women's Club, donations from generous individuals, and bequests.

The fund provides emergency financial assistance to residents of the town when other resources are not available. Garrett Park residents and employees of all ages and duration of residency have used the fund to address a variety of short-term needs, including illness, unexpected death, family separations, storm damage, tax shortfalls, and loss of employment. A form to apply for assistance from the Betsy White Emergency Fund can be obtained from a table in the Town Office or by mail (send a request to GPCF, PO Box 381). The application process and distribution of the funds are strictly confidential. The fund trustees determine the appropriateness of the requests and make decisions based on need. The anonymity of the applicants is preserved throughout the process. The trustees' decision and fund distribution will be mailed directly back to the applicant.

*What is the Ilah Geiser Music Scholarship Fund?* The GPCF also administers the Ilah Geiser Music Scholarship Fund. This fund is named for a long-time Garrett Park resident who had yearned to learn to play the piano as a youngster, but had been unable to afford lessons. In 1997 she decided to establish a music scholarship for elementary school students. The fund provides resources for one year of private instrumental music lessons for a rising 5th grade music student at Garrett Park Elementary School. A yearly musicale featuring the talents of Garrett Park residents helps fund this scholarship.

To make tax-exempt donations, make checks out to GPCF and send to GPCF, PO Box 381, Garrett Park, MD 20896. Please specify which fund you wish to support in the memo line. Thank you for your support!

## 2017 Musicale

The 21st Garrett Park Musicale, which benefits the Ilah Geiser Music Scholarship, will be held on Sunday, April 30, at 4 pm at the Town Hall. If you are interested in participating, please contact Sue Petito (240-731-0985) or Meme Lincoln (240-447-2087 or emslincoln12@gmail.com). And consider joining the Town Singers for the occasion!

## GPFS, Wild Tales, March 17

*Wild Tales* (Argentina, 2014, Rated R, in Spanish), a Best Foreign Film nominee for the 2015 Academy Awards, is a dark comedy that explores the theme of revenge and its consequences in six different tales. In the face of disapproval, injustice, frustration, whatever, the characters in each story cross the line of rational behavior and give in "to the undeniable pleasure of losing control."

The film will be shown at 8 pm. Admission is free to GPFS members or \$5 per person, \$10 per family at the door. Drinks (soda, beer, or wine) are on offer beginning at 6:45 pm at prices ranging from \$1 to \$5. Dinner (menu not yet available) is served at 7 pm. Cost for dinner is usually \$10.

See you on March 17 at the Town Hall.

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## Letter from the Mayor

I am happy to report that the sidewalks project is moving ahead again. We have just awarded a contract to Nobis Engineering to complete the engineering on the project. Their work will use the preliminary engineering done by the previous engineering firm as the starting point, and their initial emphasis will be on stormwater management and refinement of the alignment, elevations, drainage, and treatment of trees. This engineering firm works for and reports directly to the town, as opposed to the previous firm, which worked for the State Highway Administration. We have every reason to believe that Nobis will be responsive to the issues defined by the town and will be sensitive to the character of our town in its design.

We plan to have a joint meeting of the Council and the Citizen Sidewalks Advisory Committee with Nobis, open to all residents, so that we can inform the engineers of our concerns and ask them questions about the project and their plans for how they will proceed. The engineers will produce an interim plan that will be used to obtain reviews, clearances, and permits from the various agencies that must provide these for us to build the sidewalks. That plan will also be available for town committees and residents to review and comment upon. Based upon the review results, the engineers will create the final construction drawings and specifications to allow us to obtain construction bids. We know that this has been a long-drawn-out project development, and we appreciate your patience as we have gone through the necessary steps.

At the most recent Council meeting I appointed and the Council approved new members and continuing members whose terms are expiring to the Archives, Historic Preservation, and Arboretum Committees. Each of these committees was established by town ordinance, which prescribed membership, their qualifications, length of their terms, and appointment procedures. We are all grateful for the many vol-

unteers who have taken on the tasks of working on these committees to preserve and enhance our beautiful town. Much of what the town is today reflects their efforts, and their continuing activities shape what the town will be in the future.

In addition, many of the activities that we enjoy and make our town so different from surrounding communities are the work of our organizations that are not created by legislation. Activities such as Porches and Patios, the Progressive Dinner, Spooky Woods, the Newcomers Reception, and the Fourth of July Parade would not occur without the hard work and dedication of members of the Women's Club and the Citizens Association. Our films with dinners and Lunch Bunch are the result of the efforts of volunteers in the Film Society and Neighbors Helping Neighbors. The coffeehouse evenings are created by GPJams. The Cooperative Nursery School involves not only volunteer leaders but also the parents of the children in the school. The art displays in Penn Place would not occur without the Art in Penn Place volunteers. The volunteer Land Use Committee advises the Town Manager on whether proposed building permits are consistent with our land use ordinances. Other volunteer-led town activities include the Conservation Trust, the Conservation Action Network, the Garrett Park Community Fund (which includes the Betsy White Fund and the Ilah Gieser Music Scholarship), and GIVES. And, of course, the members of the Town Council and the Mayor are all volunteers. It is all of us working together that makes Garrett Park such a special place.

If you do not know what any of these organizations is all about, look it up on our Web site at [www.garrettparkmd.gov](http://www.garrettparkmd.gov). At this writing we are still at the soft launch stage, even though you can access the site. Hopefully by the time this appears in print, we will have completed a hard launch. If you are intrigued by what you read, volunteer.

Peter Benjamin

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